185, 433, 654

| | |
|---|---|
| Egypt | MR1 |
| Turkey | MB1 |
| Iraq | MH1 |
| Syria | MD1 |
| Lebanon | ME1 |
| Historical Palestine | MF2 |

/For an account of the program of industrialization in countries of the Middle East after World War I up to 1945, see 66: Bonné, M1 Middle East, category 116 as follows: Turkey - pp. 274-284, Egypt - pp. 285-286, Iraq - pp. 287-289, Palestine - 289-290, Syria and Lebanon - pp. 290-291./

The Syrian economy in 1945 was distinguished by its relatively low production of a generally poor quality. It lay in a state of decadence and stagnation that could only have been remedied by energetic action by the authorities in power. It was a virgin country waiting for people willing to work hard to develop its resources in the fields of agriculture, industry and commerce. 433

Agriculture in Syria occupies first place, whether considered from the point of view of production or the number of those who earn a living from it. It produces the largest part of the country's exports and supplies the national industries with raw materials. But, despite its preponderance over other economic activities farmers remained up to 1945 dependent on ancient methods, and were ignorant of such modern techniques as the use of machines and fertilizers. Syrian agriculture suffered helplessly from the crop rotation system, from natural pests, insects and diseases, from rain variations and the unscrupulousness of money lenders. 433 241

As to industry, it was in its infancy, still feeling its way and lacking encouragement, protection, adequate studies, knowledge and experience. 433

Nor was commerce in a better situation than agriculture and industry. During the second world war, Syrian trade lost its relations with many of the belligerent countries, and emerged from the war crippled and hampered by the restrictions of exchange control. In addition, the direction of Syrian commerce was not in the hands of Syrian nationals; the larger part of foreign trade, both exports and imports, was handled through Beirut. As a result Syrian merchants lost direct touch with countries abroad and Syria became in effect an internal market dealing in retail with neighbouring markets. Commercial agencies were in the hands of non-Syrians up to the extent of 95 per cent of the total. To complete the picture we should mention that a large part of banking operations with foreign countries took place in banks situated outside Syria, and that the purchase and sale of foreign exchange accruing to Syria was effected in the Beirut market. To conclude, control of Syrian external trade was in non-Syrian hands and the Syrian economy, in consequence, was forced to lose large sums in the form of expenses, commissions, and profits which were paid abroad for mediation in purchase and sale transactions. 439 457

14. During the period under discussion the Syrian Government exercised great effort with satisfactory results; it made a be- 185

185 ginning in solving many problems of agriculture, industry, and trade. There is not enough space here to give details of their achievements; it is enough to say that, by continuous and widespread effort, the Syrian government was able to remove external problems and to clear away many of the internal obstacles and restrictions that hampered the country's progress. Thus they prepared the way for the emergence of a policy of economic development, and created many of the essential conditions for its success.

15. Leaving aside particular and secondary problems, we can diagnose Syria's major development problems as follows : National production is still far below capacity ; a large part of national resources and wealth are not yet exploited. Many large-scale projects must be undertaken before any increase in productivity can take place. Such projects are : irrigation, the draining of marshes and extension of cultivable land ; improvement of agricultural methods, utilization of modern machinery and combatting of plant diseases and pests ; exploitation of natural resources such as minerals and mines, and the generation of electric energy and motive power ; the improvement and increase of livestock by better water supplies, shelter and pasturage ; re-afforestation and the preservation of existing forests ; the construction of roads, bridges, ports and airports, and the supplying of means of transport to facilitate communications ; the completion of land surveys and settlement operations in all districts; the construction of general warehouses; the supplying of drinking water and electricity to rural areas. But, whereas the country's needs are great, her financial means are not
454 adequate to cover them. National savings are low in themselves, as we noted above ; people prefer hoarding gold or investing in
652 real estate. There is as yet no financial market in Syria. State finances are necessarily weak so long as they depend on a weak economy. Thus, neither the state nor private individuals can be expected to finance big development.

16. It follows from the above that the economic development of Syria depends on a solution to the following problem : the Syrian economy needs capital and finance projects that will create conditions favourable to its growth ; but, as a result of its weakness and underdevelopment, it lacks the necessary financial means. In other words, the state's financial capacity is small and cannot expand unless national production grows ; and national production cannot grow unless the state's financial capacity expands. How

652 capacity, the government cannot establish a clear principle of economic development; nor can it expect to have a long-term, integrated policy, characterized by stability and permanence, and guaranteeing the execution of the projects free from interruption, vacillation and the interference of personal interests. Finally, the government has not evolved a unified policy that can integrate financial and monetary considerations on the one hand, and the requirements of economic policy on the other. If no general development programme is adopted, the authorities concerned will not be able to handle the monetary, financial and economic problems that are bound to be raised by the application of parts of the programme. The prerequisite for the solution of any problems that may arise is a planned integration of ends and means.

## Part Three

### 185 The State of Economic Development at the Present Time

27. By the end of 1953,[1] following an initial period of experimentation that lasted for nine years, Syria had covered a good distance on the road of economic development. In addition to the efforts made to execute a considerable part of the development project, the Syrian government has succeeded in creating many of the conditions necessary for further development. There remains before it the new, critical stage of determining and implementing a complete balanced development policy.

28. The Syrian government managed, in this period, to remove some of the obstacles, both external and internal, that stood in the way of the success of any development policy. It also started to make studies of the country's potentialities and began to organize the collecting of statistics and data concerning the country's condition. It strengthened the mainstays of the national economy and organized it on a firm basis. Then it turned to its monetary and banking system and established a supreme authority to undertake its administration. This authority was given the powers and means necessary for managing monetary, exchange, credit and banking

1 At the time of writing in the autumn of 1953, the final figures for 1953 were not available. This leaves a gap of one year in the survey of the period 1945-53 made in Part Two of this paper. However, no change in trends appeared in 1953.

affairs, for adapting monetary policy to changes in the economic condition, and for bringing this policy in line with the state's financial and economic policies. 185

29. The idea of setting up a planned development programme extending over several years has been gaining ground and recently obtained support from the government. The broad lines of the state's development policy were defined in Parliament in October 1953 as follows: [1]

"The state's future development policy must be embodied in an economic development programme that includes all the projects of the government and of public institutions. We consider that this programme should cover a period of not less than five years..."

"... It is necessary that the programme should have a special administration directly linked to the Office of the Chief of the State. The Board of Administration should be composed of representatives of the ministries specified by the programme, of delegates from the Monetary and Credit Council and the Council of National Resources, and of technical experts".

"The Administration should undertake the study of projects and estimate their importance, order of priority, probable benefits, the length of time needed to carry them out, and their cost. It should prepare technical specifications and after approving them should supervise their execution..."

"As to the programme's finances, we consider that it should have at its disposal a special budget, independent of the state budget, and subject to the approval of Parliament, and the programme should be financed from appropriations that could be made from the general budget, from the reserve fund, from various loans and from such extraordinary revenues as may be allocated to it".

30. It is not enough to prepare and approve a development programme, or even to set up its administration. It is essential for the success of the programme that the Planning Board should be able to solve these two major problems: ensuring harmony between development policy and financial, monetary and economic policies; securing the funds needed for development projects.

1. Statement of the President of the Republic on the financial and economic conditions of the country - October, 1953.

652
185

**Ensuring Harmony**

31. The execution of the development programme will have serious financial, monetary and economic effects upon the country. For it diverts a section of productive powers towards projects that do not necessarily lead to an immediate expansion in national production. On the contrary, it deprives production, for the period during which development projects are executed, of some of the factors that would normally be employed in producing consumption goods. Since a development programme leads to the creation of additional purchasing power, as a result of its putting into circulation amounts of money in excess of what the economy is accustomed to, there are bound to be repercussions upon prices and wages. Production of consumption goods falls but purchasing power expands. This situation will demand careful attention from the government, which can counterbalance its inflationary effects in the following ways: by regulation of the amounts that can be spent at each stage on development projects; by attempting to divert certain productive elements (such as the building industry) towards development projects; by directing the additional purchasing power towards investment projects, or by absorbing it back into the national funds through encouraging savings, through taxation, or through imposing rationing on consumption.

32. On the monetary side, a development programme raises several problems, of which the most important are securing foreign exchange and the adaptation of credit policy to the new conditions created by the programme.

As to foreign exchange, the development programme is bound to create extra demand for foreign currencies. If the exchange available is not sufficient to meet the needs of the programme in addition to the other normal needs of the country, then the Planning Board will have to evolve a means of counterbalancing the tendency such a situation will have, to depreciate the national currency. It would be necessary to: limit the importation of luxuries and inessential goods; borrow externally to secure the required exchange; increase the country's exports so as to obtain extra exchange. This is difficult to achieve however, for the reasons mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Credit policy can play a major role in leading development policy to success, and in counterbalancing some of its short-term

652
185

effects. Thus, credit may be contracted with the aim of fighting inflationary symptoms, or discount rates may be raised so as to encourage investment of private funds. Shortage of investment that may be found in certain consumption industries can be remedied by directing credit towards them, and by advancing the money they need at favourable terms.

33. As to financial policy, it plays the major role in determining the monetary or economic effects of the development project. It is well known that these monetary and economic effects differ with the different methods used to finance the development programme. It is also clear that the ease with which development policy problems can be solved depends on whether the state budget is in a state of deficit, balance or surplus. This also applies to expansion or contraction in ordinary budget expenditures and to the ways in which appropriations are spent.

34. It is not our purpose here to analyse the interaction and interrelation between each of the budgetary, monetary and economic policies on the one hand, and development policy on the other. We intend only to point out the basic fact, that no development policy should be prepared or implemented unless it harmonizes and co-ordinates with the general economic policy in all its aspects. Each element should have a planned reaction upon the others; thus all will cooperate in securing the maximum general welfare.

## Securing the Funds Needed for Development Projects

652

35. Syria's urgent development projects will cost in total some LS 400 million. Their execution will require from five to six years, which will make it necessary to secure annually a sum of LS 66 million.

The following sources of finance may be considered: taxes and reserve funds, internal and external loans, the investment of national and foreign capital.

36. There is no doubt that dependence on taxes and reserve funds is the soundest and safest method of financing development projects. Syria can allocate its available reserve funds for development projects, but cannot depend at present on taxes, since ordinary revenues are only sufficient to meet ordinary expenditure. It is neither possible nor desirable to raise taxation rates or to impose new taxes so long as the national income remains at its

has started the construction of a road which is not yet finished, but which permits trucks to reach Deirik in all seasons. Farmers flowed into the region following the opening of the road and began populating it. The present Minister of National Economy, Munir Diab, and Mr. Amin Nazif, formerly Secretary General of the Ministry of agriculture, own lands in the region.

c. Volume of Seeds and Crops

The main dry farming crop in Jazirah is wheat with "black" barley a poor second. It is estimated that about 50-60,000 tons of wheat are planted every year and some five thousand tons of barley. The average yield of wheat is 6-7 times per unit planted which gives a yearly crop of some 350-400,000 tons, of this quantity, 85-100,000 tons are needed for local consumption and for seed. This leaves about 250-300,000 tons available for export in an average year. Calculating this quantity at the price of LS 170 in the field free of all expenses, it means a revenue of LS 51 million per year to Jazirah with seeds and provisions already accounted for or about LS 250 per capita.

d. Difficulties in the Way of Agricultural Development

Agriculture in Jazirah suffers from many obstacles and hindrances which the Government can remedy with some careful thought and planning. The difficulties connected with land ownership and tenure and with credit and transport will be discussed separately, but other obstacles will be mentioned here below:

1. There is no agricultural station in the important wheat growing centers of Jazirah to record the amount of rainfall and the mean temperatures to guide the farmers.

2. The Jazirah is subject in most years to a heat wave during the month of May which destroys 25-35% of the crop. The only remedy is to introduce strains of wheat which mature before the period of the heat wave. Although the problem and the remedy are known to the Government, no effort has yet been made either to import new

185 654 strains or to cultivate them in the Government stations in Syria.

435 651 185 654 3. The price of fuel is a major obstacle to agriculture and to the possibility of competing on the world market. While the price of a ton of maxur in the Euphrates area in Iraq is LS 21 its price in Kamishli is LS 175, i.e., more than eight times as much. The same is true to a lesser degree of the price of gasoline and kerosene due to excessive Government taxation. The Government used to refund to farmers a part of the taxes on gasoline and kerosene used in agricultural machinery, but it has recently abolished even this meager help.

407 435 4. The sale of agricultural machinery and especially of its spare parts needs supervision. Agents deliberately create scarcities during the period of greatest need so as to get the highest prices possible.

485 489 5. The system of transport from the combine to the stations needs complete revision. At the present time, farmers are obliged to use jute bags on the combines to fill with wheat. The bag is bought for LS 2 but is sold as wheat in Aleppo. Since the bag weighs 1.25 kilograms and the price of a kilogram of wheat is 26 piasters, the farmer gets less than 30 piasters for every 200 he invests in a bag. This means a loss of LS 14 per ton, without counting all the extra expense of handling on the combine, then on to the truck, then to the railway station, then on the railway and, lastly, discharging at Aleppo Station, then transporting by truck to the merchant's store. All this handling, necessitated by the use of jute bags is paid by the farmer to the amount of LS 4 per ton. Added to the loss on the bag it makes a total loss of LS 15. All this could be saved if transport could be so organized as to eliminate the need for jute bags.

435 656 6. The fluctuation and uncertainty of prices is a major obstacle to the continued progress of agriculture in Jazirah. The farmer who plants his seeds in October does not know whether he will sell his crop in July for ten piasters a kilo or for thirty. He lacks information on world prices and merchants take advantage of that and of the fact that he is constantly in need of money to buy a major share of the crop at low prices. But even if the farmer were informed about world markets, Government regulations constantly hamper the free opera-

Irrigation by pump started with the rice boom in 1945 and expanded with the cotton boom of 1951. It was hit severly by the crop failure of last year and the flood of this spring, and the future of the Khabur appears dim. This is because as previously mentioned, the original amount of capital used to construct a fair sized project is large, amounting to about LS 150-200 thousand. Such a project can irrigate with two 10-inch pumps or their equivalent about 2, 500 dunums of summer crops and double the area in wheat and barley. The project will have one main canal 1 1/2-3 1/3 meters higher than ground level made entirely of earth or lined with cement to carry the water a distance of 1-3 kilometers depending on the lay of the ground, several subsidisary canals, buildings for the motors, the agricultural machinery, and the laborers.

Evidently, in order to get the best returns on the capital invested, the farmer needs to exploit to the utmost the capacity of his pumps, otherwise he will be leaving his capital idle. In this case, he will need to cultivate, on a rotation basis, 2, 500 dunums of summer crops and 5, 000 dunums of wheat and barley. But on most of the irrigation projects of the size mentioned, the area of the lands which can be irrigated is less than 1, 500 dunums in all. The surrounding lands are all higher than the main leading canal and can not be reached except by a much greater outlay of capital. This means that the farmer has to extract from an area of 1, 500 dunums, of which one-third lies fallow every year, enough profit in five to eight years, which is the average duration of the lease, to compensate him for his yearly efforts, to pay interest on the capital and to regain his investment. This should mean a net annual profit of about 45, 000 LS or LS 45 per dunum, and experience has proved that it can not be done.

The alterntive to pump irrigation on the Khabur is irrigation by gravity in works similar to that of Tal Mughass. And the Khabur lends itself in many places to such project. Mr. Delbes, agricultural advisor to Syria during the French Mandate, knows at least of three projects studied by the French High Commissariat, to build dams and derivation canals between Ras el Ain and Hassakeh. The largest one among them is to carry the water west to the region of Jabal Abdel Aziz and irrigate a very large area.

Another dam site studied by the French is at Sab'Skour. Further south in the region of Fadghami a site was selected to store the

III. Lands With Title Cover Only 30% of Jazirah

It should not be understood from the above discussion that all the lands of Jazirah are occupied by persons having title to them. Perhaps as much as 70% of the lands are occupied by persons claiming ownership but having no legal title. And here resides the great problem of Jazirah which continues to retard its development and prosperity. 423 185

There is nothing that can stabilize conditions in an agricultural society, increase confidence, improve credit, diversify the types of cultivation, increase property values, and encourage the improvement of land by long-term projects of irrigation and farm construction, like a secure and stable system of land ownership.

It is the misfortune of Jazirah that successive Governments since Syrian independence have not only ignored this basic fact, but have done everything in their power to make the stabilization of the land problem in Jazirah more remote.

Before the beginning of 1952 land registration in Jazirah suffered from all the delays, expenses, corruption, and hindrances prevalent in other parts of Syria. Moreover, as a frontier zone, land registration was subject to an authorization by the Chief of State, and in the last three years registration of land acquired through cultivation for a period of ten years was stopped by decision of the Council of Ministers.

The governing idea behind all these restrictions is that individuals are usurping the public domain illegally. While this may be true in some cases, the measures taken to correct the situation are out of proportion to the problem at hand and are applied not only to usurpers out to land owners of good faith as well. The result is that three-quarters of the lands of Jazirah belonging mostly to peasants and medium owners are unregistered.

IV. Decree-law 96

Decree-law 96 starts with this idea of correcting the usurpations of the public domain, and adds to it the concept of social justice as exemplified by the policy of encouraging small land holdings and dividing the large estates. 423 185 656

A. Contradictory Policies of the Government

423
●185
656

The decree is interesting in its application to Jazirah and it seems that the Government there follows two contradictory policies diametrically opposed and antagonistic to each other. On the one hand, decree No. 510, dated March 23, 1950, and decree No. 80, dated January 23, 1952, facilitate the importation and distribution of powerful agricultural machinery among the farmers in general and those in particular of Jazirah. The use of agricultural machinery goes hand-in-hand with the extensive cultivation of large areas of land to make their employment economic. On the other hand, and surprisingly, only eight days after the promulgation of the decree for the distribution of agricultural machinery, decree-law 90 dated January 31, 1952, prevents the farmer from owning or renting (in its interpretative communique) more than 1500 dunums in Jazirah an acreage which does not lend itself to economic tractor cultivation.

The decree has been in operation now for seven months and its application should have vindicated the two principles on which it depends, viz 1 to correct the usurpations of the public domain, and to divide the big estates among the needy farmers.

Assuming that the policy of the State is to encourage small ownership of land to be tilled by the farmer using cows or mules, and that the importation of heavy agricultural machinery was a mistake not to be repeated, the logical procedure by the Government would have been to establish simplified processes and register in the name of peasants pieces of 1500 dunums each to which they have a right both in the old and the new law. The Government has had ample time during these eight months to enforce its own decree-law and register tens of thousands of 1500 dunum pieces and give their users legal title to them. Had the Government done that, it would have found the problem greatly simplified. The Kurdish and Bedouin family has in general three to four adult members working on the common land. According to decree 96, each member has a right to 1500 dunums. The Government would have to grant them extra land to reach its quota.

B. Size of Land Holdings in Jazirah

The point is that, had the Government proceeded in this manner, the practical result would have been the stabilization and legalization of the present small and medium ownership.

423
185
666

This, according to the following table borrowed from Gib Report, page 20, would have legalized the situation in 57% of the Jazirah lands, leaving 9% as public domain, and only 34% not complying with the terms of the decree.

| Small Holdings Less than 10 hectares | Medium Holdings 10-100 hectares | Large Holdings Over 100 hectares | State-Owned Lands |
|---|---|---|---|
| 56,000 | 528,000 | 343,000 | 96,000 |
| 5% | 52% | 34% | 9% |

Instead, the Government's only contribution to the solution of the land problem was to prohibit entirely the registration of any land from January 1952 to the present time.

If the Gibb statistics are correct, and they are presumably taken from Government sources, the land reform in Jazirah contemplated by decree 96 concerns only 34% of the region's entire area.

In dealing with this portion of Jazirah, the Syrian Government has to decide on its agricultural policy. It must make up its mind whether it wants to divide the big estates, with or without compensation, and distribute them in small lots to farmer families using mules, thus increasing the population of Jazirah greatly, so that its production of wheat will not much exceed its local consumption, and depriving Syria of the income derived from its present yearly export. Alternatively it must decide that Syria wants to increase its exports of wheat by extending the use of agricultural machinery whose effective use requires holdings of more than 1,000 hectares.

Coming back to the discussion of the 34% of Jazirah lands in holdings of over 100 hectares, the Government should have proceeded immediately, after the promulgation of the law, to their surveying and delimitation to get a clear picture of the situation. Without venturing into exact statistics, the following description is to the point. It endeavors to show that excessive land ownership is limited to relatively few individuals and that the problem is better solved by the Government by considering each case on its merits. The problem of the Government is further facilitated because the tribal Sheiks claim that they hold the lands for their tribe and not for themselves. The Government should have asked the Sheiks to proceed to the distribution of these lands under its supervision.

471 The land problem along the Khabur is not to distribute land to the Jubur Bedouin who cannot use it because he cannot irrigate it, but to remove the hold of the Milhem family and to facilitate ownership by the entrepreneur who invests money in the land, installs pumps, and irrigates areas formerly arid. Unfortunately, the old laws and decree 96 work for the benefit of the river bank owner who, at the end of the lease, takes possession not only of his original strip of land which he leased, but also of all the new land brought under cultivation and irrigation by the lessee at his own expense.

471
425

## VI. Recapitulation

185 To recapitulation, the problem of land ownership in Jazirah is one of stabilizing the existing property rights for 57% of the area of the region, of distributing about 25% by the simple expedient of having the Sheik or Agha share his land with the members of his tribe in whose name he holds it, or passing legislation to enable the investor along the Khabur to gain ownership of the land he irrigates and reclaims, and of simplifying the processes of law so that all these functions can be performed and disputes between property owners settled and deeds granted within a short period. It becomes apparent that the success of such a policy is subject to a prior survey of the region. But this need not necessarily mean long delays because aerial survey at present is a quick operation.

The importance of the stabilization on the regularization of the land problem in Jazirah cannot be overemphasized. Besides all the advantages mentioned on page 27, land will come to have real value on the market and the wealth of the entire Jazirah will be increased tenfold. The famer will be enable to diversify his culture and escape the dangers of monoculture. After surveying the division of land, the farmer, working on his own lot in which he has no partners, will be induced to improve it with buildings, irrigation wells, fertilizers, and tree and vegetable gardens. There is no reason why the plains of Jazirah, wherever water is available, cannot be made to resemble the gardens of Damascus with time and an increase in agricultural knowledge among the population.

## IV. Telephone, Telegraph and Air Communication

206 509 In 1950 telephone communication became possible with Jazirah for the first time on a commercial basis. Telegraph communication has long been established and an air service connectin Qamishli with Aleppo and Damascus started in 1946, then interrupted by the Palestinian War, has been resumed twice weekly. Fares from Qamishli to Aleppo and Damascus are LS 25 and 50, respectively.

## V. Railway Line Projects

185 Railway lines wholly inside Syria from Jazirah to the interior cities have been suggested by the Gibb report and by the United Nations Economic Survey Mission. They suggested a line from Tal Koshak to Hassakeh and from there to Rakka and Aleppo. Such a line would by-pass Qamishli which is the more important agricultural and commercial center, and would go in a district only newly developed, sparsely populated and not of the fertility of the Qamishli area. It seems that a line starting from Qamishli itself would be shorter and would service a more fertile and populated district. From Hassakeh the line could follow the Khabur as long as possible before veering to Deir Ezzor. This would be longer than the proposed line from Hassakeh to Rakka directly, but it would have the advantage of servicing the Khabur Valley and collecting its crops, whereas, the line Hassakeh-Rakka is completely desert. From Rakka there is only one route to Aleppo.

It is difficult to choose between a policy of road construction and railway lines without detailed study of the economics of both, but, whatever the result of the study, Jazirah needs cheap and easy means of communication.

## COMMERCE OF JAZIRAH

438 441 It stands to reason that the commerce of Jazirah is mainly in its staple prodcuts and in the goods required for the development of its essential industry which is agriculture.

The main crop being wheat, it forms the largest item both in bulk and in value. But the Jazirah merchant plays a secondary role in the handling of this crop. He is sometimes a partner, but more

total Syrian cereals. Only Aleppo was ahead of it with 30% of the total production. (Gibb Report, table 16, p. 28) At present, it is probable that Jazirah surpasses Aleppo in cereal production and with an area approaching that of the Mohafazat of Aleppo, it is potentially more productive because of the Jagjag and Khabur Rivers which make possible a more diverse agriculture. 438

The problem of land ownership is bound to be settled in some way and credit is expanding gradually so that the dependance of Jazirah on Aleppo may diminish with time. The lack of lands and the constant increase in population will force the farmer to turn to intensive cultivation which in turn requires more labor and creates jobs for more people. The towns will benefit from increased production and population and will prosper and grow in their turn. It is logical to anticipate that Jazirah merchants will try to dispose of their crops without the help of Aleppo entrepreneurs. This makes for increased profits and more propserity. It is also reasonable to expect that a small industry based on the processing of agricultural products, such as flour mills, vegetable oil, starch, fruit, and vegetable conserves, will be established in the town of Jazirah. When cotton becomes an established crop, it is economical to gin it in the nearest town and save the cost of transport. The seeds will be needed for planting, for the extraction of oil and for cattle feed. 185

Qamishli is the only town of consequence in a fertile area of 700,000 hectares almost all cultivable in one way or another in the Qadas of Qamishli and Dijla. It is the chief town between Mossul and Aleppo, a distance of some 700 kilometers. Nisibin the older town now in Turkey was alwasy an important commercial center in the old times and Qamishli now has taken its place. It would not be surprising if in another 20 years Qamishli attained a population of 80,000. 361

7:Lewis S-5 (ca. 1940-45) 1948 MD1 Syria MD1



necessity for health's sake alone, but should be part of a general *mise en valeur* of the region's resources. This is the type of approach which is most likely to succeed, because it is linked with the material interests of the landowners. They will lend their support and active participation if given technical advice, supervision, and material and financial help to defray part of the capital outlay.

## Swamps, Floods, and Soil Erosion

Malaria-control measures were taken with a fair degree of success in 20 villages in 1944–1945. Various factors, however, combine to prevent a permanent reduction of the incidence of the disease. Among these are the necessity for constant supervision, the need for repeated cleanings of canals and ditches, and the improvidence of the inhabitants. Most important is the fact that floods will certainly undo much of the work.

Winter floods are frequently heavy enough to destroy or damage seriously the repair and maintenance works, which are of value to agriculture and malaria control alike. Malaria causes debility and apathy among the villagers, and the certainty that floods will recur reinforces this apathy, making everyone disinclined to expend energy and money in work which must be done again in a few years. The canals and watercourses at Moufaggar, for example, have been badly damaged in the past; in fact, damage by floods was the main reason for the modification of the old foggara system. The southern foggara and watercourse are now protected against torrents by a concrete wall at the upper end, but as the system lies in one of the main valleys coming from Jebel Bil'as, it is doubtful whether the device will be a great success. Although the broad, nearly flat valley north of Selemiya has benefited from its wide catchment area—it is built up of alluvium, as much as 10 feet deep—it is partly derelict because floods have created extensive swamps and ruined old foggaras. In 1945–1946 useful drainage work was undertaken here.

The floods are due in part to the occasional sudden and torrential rainstorms, characteristic of this as of other semiarid regions. Wadis are sometimes filled for a few hours with violent, detritus-laden torrents and are then left dry again. The steep slopes and absorptive limestones are contributing factors. English merchants, traveling in 1691, noted[11] that after a heavy rainstorm

> those hollow Gutts which we passed over without the least appearance of Moisture, were, by the Cataracts which descended from the Mountains, become Rivers; . . . the next Morn-

[11] "An Extract of the Journals" (*op. cit.*), p. 144 [Miscellanea Curiosa, pp. 139–140].

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MD1



model or under Western control have been established; students have sought foreign universities, on their own initiative or as members of official missions; European languages have been studied and Western books translated into Arabic. At present the Arabs, at least in the more advanced of the Arab countries, have achieved a certain understanding of Western technology and natural science, and of the polite literature of England and France. But Christianity, European philosophy, music and art, the whole culture of Russia and central Europe and the literature of the ancient world are still very imperfectly known.

The study of the West has itself done something to Westernize the Arab mind. The student cannot be unaffected by the object of his thought. In so far as theories of Westernization have been formulated, they fall into two main categories, which may conveniently be called theories of Islamic revival and of secularization. As expounded below they are 'ideal types'; any particular Arab thinker will probably be found to hold not one of the theories in its pure form, but a distinctive blend of several.

3

The movement of Islamic revival springs from a vision of an Arabo-Islamic society which neither apes the West nor clings blindly to outworn forms: of which the animating spirit and the principles of judgement are derived from Islam, but the ways of life and thought largely approximate or 'correspond' to those of Western society; and which has a 'healthy' relationship to the Christian world, a relationship of mutual respect and influence, based upon the acknowledgement of equality.

This much would be generally agreed, but there is great difference of opinion about the methods by which such a state of affairs could be brought into existence. There are some who claim that what is necessary is not so much a regeneration of the spirit and thought of Islam as an effort to unify and direct the political efforts of the Islamic peoples in defence of the Islamic world against Western penetration. They wish to accept only the externals of Western civilization, the sources of its economic and military strength. This was the doctrine of the Pan-Islamic movement, originated by Jemal ad-Din al-Afghani in Egypt and elsewhere during the

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria Mp 1



later decades of the nineteenth century, and used by the Sultan Abdul-Hamid II in order to revive the waning prestige and influence of his throne. Its weakness was its failure to recognize the malady in the soul of Islam.

There are other movements whose exponents see the necessity not simply for political action but for a revival in the religious life of Islam, and who believe that Islam is capable of producing such a revival out of its own resources. This is the attitude of thinkers who support the Wahabi movement, which aims at returning to the primitive purity and fervour of the apostolic age of Islam, and at removing all those later accretions and distortions which can find no justification in the Quran or the Traditions of the Prophet. Wahabism originated in central Arabia in the eighteenth century, and has had a great influence upon Islamic life during the present generation, largely because of the political success of the Wahabi leader, Abdul-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud, King of Sa'udi Arabia.

Wahabism and similar movements are concerned primarily with religious practice, and regard theology and speculation with suspicion, as unnecessary and possibly dangerous. But there are other movements which, while not belittling the need for a revival of piety and the devotional life, believe also in the necessity for a reconsideration and re-statement of Islamic doctrine and for a revision of Islamic jurisprudence; and they realize that these tasks can only be accomplished with the help of the intellectual methods and achievements of the modern West. The movement originated by Shaikh Muhammad Abdu in Egypt, and sometimes called the 'Islamic Modernist Movement', was in one of its aspects an attempt to respond to the need for a re-statement of Islamic doctrine. The leaders of this movement have been able and sincere men, and their achievement and influence have been great. But as a movement of thought its effectiveness has been limited by two factors. On the one hand, its knowledge and understanding of Western culture are defective; it has been too exclusively concerned with modern science, or at least with nineteenth century 'scientificism'; and it has not attempted to arrive at a profound understanding of the basic elements in Western thought, Greek philosophy and Christian theology. On the other hand, it has at times been much concerned with polemics, with showing that Islam has

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1968 MD1 Syria MD1



something to offer the world, and that its doctrine is more fully in accordance with the discoveries of modern science than is that of Christianity; it has in consequence lacked the intellectual objectivity which is necessary for constructive thought.

4

Polemics and the study of modern scientific thought are necessary; but only slowly and among a few groups of thinkers in Cairo and Beirut is it being realized that something more fundamental is needed. The whole intellectual life of Islam needs to be re-created, in the same way as Wahabism is trying to re-create its devotional life. The formal precepts and practices into which Islam like all religions has tended to become crystallized need to be broken up, and the principles which lie at the root of them, and which they have attempted to express, to be once more seen naked and in themselves. The vital spirit of affirmation which is at the heart of Islam, and which has long been quiescent although not dead, should be revived; it should be made articulate in a system of thought adequate to meet the intellectual needs and answer the questionings of the modern mind.

The problem of the reconstruction of Islamic philosophy and theology is only beginning to reveal itself; it is too early to expect that anything should have been done to solve it. The method and success of its solution depend largely upon unpredictable factors: upon the emergence of Arab Moslem thinkers with gifts sufficient to their task, and the revival of the spirit of reflection and speculation. But it is possible to point to certain preliminary tasks which can be accomplished even in the absence of such factors.

The first is the study of the great Islamic thinkers of the Middle Ages, who tried to do for Islam what the thinkers of coming generations must attempt once more: to turn the simple creed of a nomadic people into a system of thought, an explanation of the great problems of human destiny, able to satisfy the reflective and inquiring minds of those trained in the philosophical tradition of Plato and Aristotle. To-day a similar problem arises—to construct an Islamic system of thought adequate to meet the intellectual doubts to which the modern world is prone; and those who are attempting to solve it will be helped by analyzing the thought of their

11: Hourani 3-4 (no date) 1948 MD1 Syria MD1



fundamental principles. But it is important also for other reasons. Greek thought lies at the root of that Islamic philosophy of the Middle Ages of which the significance has already been mentioned: it is therefore part of the intellectual heritage of the Islamic East as well as of the West; it may serve as that common ground of agreement and understanding which is necessary if a fruitful intellectual contact is to be re-established between the Moslem and the Christian worlds.

5

The Syrian people will have a special part to play in the intellectual reconstruction of Islam, because of certain characteristics which they possess. They are peculiarly aware of the 'tension' between East and West, and between Islam and Christianity. This is partly because their minds are exceptionally subtle, flexible and sensitive; but partly also because Syria has always been exposed to influences coming in from Mediterranean lands, and tends to be affected by them sooner and more profoundly than the other Arab countries. Through the mission-schools, through emigration and in other ways there has been built up in Syria an educated class Westernized in spirit as well as in externals, but still Arabic in language and for the most part in sympathies and feeling. Thus the conflict between East and West has become a conflict inside their own souls; as such it raises problems which pose themselves with peculiar urgency.

The factors which make the problems more profoundly felt and more urgent in Syria than elsewhere make them also more likely to find a solution there. It is educated Syrians who are best fitted to see the tension between East and West on the level not of politics or polemics but of doctrine. But if they are to contribute effectively to the revival of the Arab and Islamic mind, they must develop an intellectual life of their own, and not be content to become culturally a province of Egypt.

6

There is one factor which gives Syria a unique position in the Arab world. It possesses a large Christian population, whose intellectual life and Christian consciousness have been reviving in recent years. The impact of the West upon them has been as great as upon the Moslems, although of course it has taken a

different form: the West has meant for them not only the discovery of a new way of life but, in the most fundamental things, a rediscovery of their true selves. The result has been an interesting and important revival of Christian culture, expressing itself through Arabic and through French. It began as a revival of literature and language, and as such was a part, and a very important part, of the general Arabic literary renaissance; but gradually it is becoming conscious of the deepest spiritual question which faces it, the question of what it is to be an Arab Christian.

This movement of Christian life and thought is important first of all for its own sake, but also for the part it may play in the re-awakening of Islam. The Syrian Christians are, as Christians, particularly fitted to understand the culture of Europe; while as Arabs, speaking the Arabic language and conversant with its literature, they can interpret Europe to the Arab Moslems and, what is more important still, can confront them inescapably with the challenge of Christianity. They do not feel the conflict between the West and the Islamic East in exactly the same form as that in which Moslems feel it. But they feel it in another form, and in one which raises problems of which the solution is both particularly necessary and particularly difficult. For them the problem poses itself as one of political loyalties, and therefore their material well-being and perhaps even their physical safety depend upon their solving it. In the conflict between the European Powers and the forces of nationalism, on which side should they range themselves? Religious affinities, long-standing ties of friendship, gratitude for favours received and fear of Moslem domination draw them to the side of Europe; but ties of language and culture, common feelings of humiliation and pride, and the desire to put an end to the religious dissensions of the past attract them to the nationalist camp. Divided loyalties of this sort are tragic, but they are also a necessary stage in the development of thought, alike for the individual and for whole peoples; it is in the struggle to reunite the divided personality that the intellect becomes mature. The Christians stand to the Syrian people roughly as the latter as a whole to the Arab people: it is in them that the tension which is felt vaguely and in some degree by all goes deepest and may reach its crisis earliest. But if the crisis is to be fruitful, they must try at one and the same time

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MD1



to remember that they are Christians, and revive their specific Eastern Christian thought and life, and to remember that they are part of Arab Asia and have a special mission to perform in the East. The attempt has already begun. Among the Catholics and Greek Orthodox of Beirut there are already small groups of thinkers who are trying to understand the nature of Christianity and of their special duty as members of the Eastern Churches; there are other groups which are struggling with the question of the national existence and loyalty of the Arab Christians. There are very few, however, who are trying to hold together in a balance the two aspects of their being, as Christians and as Arabs. The attempt is difficult, some would say impossible; but on its success depends much more than their own fate.

7

The other movement, that of secularization, springs from the belief of many Arab thinkers that the superior strength and stability of Western society is due to the limitations which have been imposed upon the action and influence of religion. (This belief illustrates one of the main characteristics of Arab thought to-day: the conviction that the West has a 'secret', which, if only the Arabs could find it, would confer on them success similar to that of the Western nations.) In Western thought, each 'field' is autonomous in the choice of its principles and methods; and the Western community is a secular community, in which religion is tolerated, but no longer gives the regulative principles for every kind of human activity. Western thought is no longer theocentric, Western society no longer theocratic. In the same way the Arabs, these thinkers argue, should no longer attempt to regulate their society by Islamic doctrine and law; they should curb the pretensions of the religious leaders, and having done so should reorganize each aspect of their community in the light of those principles which Western experience shows to be appropriate to it. Secularism has taken many shapes. It has been one of the factors in the growth of the nationalist movement.[1] It is also giving rise to a movement of philosophical, ethical and social thought.

In the sphere of philosophical thought, this movement has so far made little headway. Books have been written upon

[1] See Chapter VI.

11: Hourani 5-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria M01



the scientific spirit and upon freedom of thought, and there have been attacks on particular religious abuses. But the hold of Islamic orthodoxy upon educated and uneducated alike is still too strong for a frontal attack to be made upon its claims to explain the whole Universe and to regulate the whole of human life. Even those who have attempted to defend Islam in modern language have at times been reproached with infidelity and atheism.

Greater changes have taken place in the sphere of ethical and sociological thought. It is possible to see the beginning of a movement of 'Social Secularism', which seeks to make the welfare of the individual in this world the norm of social organization; and which as a corollary of this advocates sweeping reforms in the existing structure of society.

The movement for social reform must be clearly distinguished from the improvements in social conditions which have taken place during the present generation, and some of which are mentioned in another part of this book.[1] Of course the two are connected in the sense that the improvement of standards and ways of living constitutes the ultimate goal of the social welfare movement. But such improvements as have been effected during the past twenty years have been due rather to the action of the Government or to the increased prosperity of the country than to the pressure of any considerable body of opinion; and during that period the immediate concern of the social welfare movement has been not so much with the raising of standards as with an indispensable preliminary task: the creation of a social conscience, a conviction that certain standards are desirable.

In so far as this movement exists at all it is of very recent growth. Under the Ottoman Turks it would have been impossible for such a movement to come into existence without arousing suspicion and perhaps repressive action on the part of the authorities. Moreover, the very concepts of public opinion and voluntary organization are of recent introduction into the Near East. Even now the idea of social reform has not penetrated very deep. It is still largely ignored by most of the organized political parties, which tend to concentrate upon the political issue of independence and to treat all other issues as secondary.

Perhaps the most important social welfare organization is

[1] See Chapter V.

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MD1



that which was established some years ago in the American University of Beirut. Its summer camps and other activities aim not so much at reforming the social life of the rural districts as at giving University students, who will in future constitute an important element in the ruling class, an awareness and understanding of the problems of rural life. Around the Jesuit University also there is growing up a movement which aims at making the educated Catholic youth of Lebanon more conscious of the social doctrine of their religion.

8

In addition to the problems inherent in the process of Westernization as such, there are others which are due to the particular phase which that process has reached. One such problem is created by the existence of two main streams of Western influence, French and Anglo-Saxon. The study of the French language and its culture has been stimulated by its being one of the official languages throughout the Mandatory period, by the teaching of it in almost all schools, both private and public, and by the long-standing connexion between France and certain elements in the population. The study of the English language is encouraged by commercial connexions with the Anglo-Saxon countries, by the existence of a number of American Protestant mission schools, by the movement of emigration and by the predominance of British influence in the neighbouring Arab countries.

Here as elsewhere, the exponents of French and Anglo-Saxon forms of Western culture have not always shown so great a solidarity with one another as might be desired; and they have often been estranged from one another, not only because of the conflict of British and French political interests and rivalry between Protestant and Catholic missions in the Levant, but also because of fundamental differences in the French and Anglo-Saxon concepts of culture and education.

The differences between the two are reflected in the two Universities to which they have given rise. The Université de S. Joseph is maintained and largely staffed by Jesuits and is Catholic in spirit; the American University was originally a Protestant college, but is now officially and so far as possible in practice unsectarian. The former has for many years been subsidized, at least in some of its faculties, by the French

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MDI



production. A reform in the system of land-tenure would also help. In some parts of Lebanon small free-holdings are to be found, but in Syria large estates are the rule, and 'métayage' is perhaps the most common form of tenancy. The 'musha'' system of communal ownership, under which holdings are periodically re-distributed, is also widespread. In the past twenty years the Mandatory authorities have made progress with land-survey and the settlement of title, and with the division of lands held under the 'musha'' system But greater tasks remain. Large tracts of the country are still in the possession of a small number of landowners, who for the most part are not interested in improving either the productivity of their lands or the standard of living of the workers. The creation of a free peasantry, by the break-up of the large estates and the appropriate use of the vast state-domains, is still in the future. The facilities for agricultural credit are very inadequate; there are practically no co-operatives and very few agricultural banks, and in consequence the peasant is in the clutches of the money-lender. The tax-system is regressive and weighs heavily upon the cultivator.

A special problem is created by the Beduin, of whom there are over half a million. Their economic function is the breeding of camels in the steppes and desert regions where agriculture is impossible. They are divided into tribes of which the most important are the various Anazah tribes—the Ruwala, the Feddan, and the Sba—in the steppe and desert south and west of the Euphrates, and the Shammar in the Jazirah. Traditionally contemptuous of the settled population and of all government, in the past they have been a serious obstacle to agriculture; but during the last two generations or so the Government has made a serious attempt to control their wanderings, and t· prevent their raiding each other and the settled regions, while allowing them to preserve their tribal law and organization. At the same time their economic position is being undermined by the decline in the demand for camels. This makes it the easier to induce them to settle on the land. In the Jazirah, in the Hauran and elsewhere tribes can be found which are abandoning the wandering life. They take to breeding sheep as well as camels and become semi-sedentary; then they begin to cultivate the land and in time become wholly sedentary, thus continuing

courts', of which the personnel was partly French and only partly indigenous; this system replaced that of the 'capitulations' which had existed in the Ottoman Empire and of which the operation was suspended so long as the Mandate should continue.

8

The declarations of Syrian and Lebanese independence in 1941 have been gradually followed by a partial extension of self-government. Although the Mandate has not yet been formally extinguished, strict Mandatory control no longer exists. During the years from 1918 to 1941, during which France exercised this control, her efforts were attended with some success, but in general met with failure.

Briefly stated, the achievement of France was to bring into existence in Syria and Lebanon some of the essential conditions which would make possible the transition from a medieval to a modern society. Law and order were firmly established, even in backward regions where civil government existed scarcely or not at all in Turkish days. The improvements which were effected in the system of communications assisted this process. Good trunk-roads now link the main towns, and subsidiary roads have opened up the countryside to motor-traffic. These and other improvements have served not only to increase the efficiency of government but also to diminish local differences and prejudices.

The system of public finance was reduced to some sort of order. It was placed on a comparatively reasonable basis, although there are still serious flaws, as for example the regressive incidence of taxation. On the whole budgets balanced; and after the share of the French Mandated Territories in the Ottoman Debt was paid off in 1933 they had no public debt at all.

The improvements in public order and administration made possible an extension in the area of cultivation. The nomads were no longer allowed to raid the settled land, and were being gradually induced to become peasants. Some of the areas which they formerly dominated were thus opened up to agriculture; this was especially marked in the Syrian Jazirah.

For the first time for many centuries, the religious minorities were treated on a level of full equality with the Sunni Moslems in all official matters, judicial and administrative alike. (Some

11: Hourani 5-4 (no date) 1948 MD1 Syria MD1



of them indeed were better treated than the bulk of the population.) Special regard was paid to their needs and traditions, and opportunities were given for the development of their self-consciousness and self-respect. The effects of generations of inferiority cannot be wholly wiped out in the course of twenty years, but in those years Syria and Lebanon made a certain advance towards individual equality as the democratic countries of the West understand it.

Among the most urgent of the country's social problems is that of the archaic system of land-tenure. No direct assault, it is true, was made on the position of the great semi-feudal landowners. But the first step towards reform was taken by the establishment of a modern system of land-registration and the initiation of a land survey. Also the number of small freeholders was increased by the sale of public domain and the encouragement of the permanent partition of land held communally on the 'musha'' system.[1] In addition something was done to help foreign trade by the extension of harbour and other facilities.

A State system of schools was constructed almost from nothing; it is still very imperfect and not yet able to supply so good an education as is given by the best of the private schools, but at least it includes every grade of school, from primary up to the Syrian University in Damascus, an official institution set up in the early years of French Mandatory rule with the object of providing higher education in Arabic.

The foundations which have been laid are solid, but there is still much to be done before Syria and Lebanon possess even the framework of a modern society. Thus expenditure on public works and social services is still very small; the medical services are inadequate. No adequate census has been taken, although there has been a very elaborate and complete one in the neighbouring territory of Palestine. Labour legislation scarcely exists. Most serious gap of all, only inadequate measures to improve agricultural conditions have so far been adopted. Little provision has been made for agricultural education. Although excellent plans for irrigation have been drawn up, few of them were put into effect until the Allied occupation of 1941. The authorities had done little to provide facilities for agricultural credit, and nothing to encourage the formation of co-operative societies.

[1] See Chapter V.

14:International Bank S-5(1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

# ANNEX D *NOTES ON IRRIGATION*

## 1 THE GHAB PROJECT

372
453
185

The Ghab valley, part of the Orontes river valley, is about 50 kilometers long from south to north and about 10 kilometers wide. There is in the valley a marshy area of about 35,000 hectares, which cannot be cultivated at present, although it consists mostly of good alluvial soil. If drained and irrigated the reclaimed land would probably be suitable for rice, cotton, sugar beet and pulses as summer crops, and wheat, barley and winter vetch or clover during the winter. It has the great advantage of being near both the important domestic market of Aleppo and the port of Latakia, permitting ready export of products in excess of local needs.

The marsh would be drained by excavation of a basaltic sill at Kfeir that now prevents the out-flow of water, and by construction of a system of drainage canals. Included in the area to be developed for agricultural use is the Acharneh plain just upstream from the Ghab valley in a bend of the Orontes. The Orontes river is now unable to drain the plain because its bed has been raised by silting. An extensive network of irrigation canals would be constructed for the irrigation of the plain and the valley. Including the reclaimed land, the total irrigated area would be about 65,000 hectares. A reservoir with a storage capacity of about 68 million cubic meters would be constructed behind a dam near Halfaya to control the Orontes flood, and a second dam located near Rastane would provide a reservoir of about 180-265 million cubic meters for irrigation purposes. About 20,000 KW of electric power would eventually be developed in hydroelectric plants at Rastane, Maharda and Jisr ech Choghour. The last two plants, however, could be operated only during the off-season for irrigation.

Of the 65,000 hectares, 43,000 have not previously been irrigated and of these 29,000 hectares are government-owned. The project would further provide for the settlement of a large number of farmers in the latter area.

It is anticipated that completion of the entire project will require about 10 years, proceeding in overlapping stages as follows: (a) drainage of the Orontes valley; (b) the Halfaya flood control dam; (c) a part of the road system; (d) a soil improvement program; (e) about 75% of the irrigation

14:International Bank S-5(1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1



312 663 185 network. If an early start is made on (a), (b) and (c), then the soil improvement program and irrigation network might be initiated in 1956 and 1957 respectively.

The later work, mainly in the Acharneh plain, will be done after 1960. It will include drainage of the plain, construction of the Halfaya tunnels, completion of the road system, construction of the irrigation network of the Acharneh plain and Rastane dam, and the relocation of the Amir Ghajar hydro plant. The entire project could be completed by the end of 1963.

In the Ghab area, 41,680 hectares will be irrigated by a system of three main canals, one on each bank of the Orontes, branching from an intake to be constructed near Acharneh, and a third, made from the present bed of the Orontes, originating five kilometers downstream near Ammourine from an intake built in the new Orontes. This will irrigate the lands between the river and the two other main canals. The total area brought under irrigation in the Ghab, taking into account the 13,600 hectares now under partial irrigation, will not exceed 28,000 hectares until about 1963. If temporary limitations on summer irrigation are to be avoided, the work will have to proceed according to a closely coordinated schedule.

*Cost*

The preliminary cost estimate made in 1952 and later brought up to date at the request of the International Bank forms the basis of the following estimate, which includes engineering and supervision expenses, and which assumes that the major proposed technical revisions of the provisional plans will be adopted. On this basis the total cost of the full program is estimated at £S 130.85 million, exclusive of the cost of local and national roads, or £S 169.85 if these are included.[1] The foreign exchange requirement would be about one-third of these totals. During the term of the mission's program (to December 1960) disbursements are likely to be £S 84.25 million without roads or £S 110.25 million if roads are included. Additional funds required for indirect consequences of the project have not been included in the costs for the main project.

[1] All figures are exclusive of any margin for contingencies.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1



*Economic Benefits*

The mission estimates that the gross value of the produce of the Ghab area will be in the neighborhood of £S 63 million annually, or about £S 47 million after deducting the amount already produced in the area in question. The production of cotton, maize, sorghum, rice and sugar beets is particularly likely to have a marked impact on Syria's balance of trade. It may be assumed that the output of cotton and cottonseed will in effect be added to the country's exportable surplus; the additional rice production may make Syria fully self-sufficient in that commodity; and the sugar beet production should permit a considerable import saving.

In addition to the project's contribution to an increase in national income and an improvement in the balance of payments, the settlement of farmers in the area made possible by the project will assist in relieving the present population pressure in the province of Latakia and particularly in the Alaouit mountains. In Latakia, for example, the amount of cultivated land available per person is less than 50% of the average for Syria as a whole. Settlers in the Ghab will be able to earn substantially more than the bare living they have been able to eke from the soil in the past.

*Organization*

The "Administrative Office of the Drainage and Irrigation Works of the Ghab Lands" was created in 1951, to be attached to the Ministry of Public Works until the technical work is completed. It will be responsible for the design of the works, award of contracts, supervision of construction, payment of expenses and for sale of the land. As parts of the project are completed, the Office will take care of the operation and maintenance of the dams and of the irrigation and drainage networks and will collect water charges. During the planning and construction period the Office should recruit and train staff to carry out the continuing operation and management of the project.

It is important that the policy, and the attendant operating and budget delegations, provide for the establishment and operation of the agricultural research centers and for a long-range educational and farm demonstration program; otherwise, it will be practically impossible to achieve acceptable land use in the area.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1



## II PROJECTED SCHEMES

185 312 653 The Youssef Pasha project is the most important of those under consideration, but it is still at the planning stage. No decision has been taken with regard to the irrigation of the Euphrates valley as a whole.

### *Euphrates Valley—Youssef Pasha Dam*[2]

In Syria the long narrow Euphrates valley stretches generally northwest to southeast from Djerablous at the Turkish border to Abou Kemal at the Iraqi border. It is about 450 kilometers long; its average width is about 7.5 kilometers, its maximum 16.

The soils of the valley proper are mainly alluvial, varying from silt to sandy loam and clay. With irrigation, they would be suitable for cotton, rice, sugar beet, peanuts, sorghum, etc. as summer crops, and wheat, barley and winter legumes as the main winter crops.

Irrigation of the whole Euphrates valley, on the assumption that about 85% of the land can be cultivated, would require about 170 cubic meters per second, more than can be assumed to be Syria's share of the natural flow of the Euphrates. Irrigation could probably profitably be extended to an additional area of about 130,000 hectares on the left bank in the vicinity of Raqqa. All in all, a total supply of about 226 cubic meters per second would be needed, about 75% of the maximum of 300 cubic meters per second utilizable for irrigation from the river's natural flow, which would leave only 25% for Iraq. For this reason, and because of the power potential, it was thought desirable to construct a storage dam on the Euphrates; Youssef Pasha was selected as the site. British engineering consultants recommended a concrete dam of the pierced type, 650 meters long with 52 sluice gates, and a power plant capable of producing about 45,000 KW of firm power or a yearly output of about 400 million KWH, plus about 120 million KWH of secondary power.

The consultant firm originally estimated the project cost, including a transmission line to Aleppo, at about £S 114 million; a revaluation made in 1953 raised the estimate to £S 150 million. The capacity of the reservoir behind the dam would increase the flow of the river utilizable for irriga-

[2] Since studies of the valley have not advanced to the point of a draft project, the figures which follow are only indications of the order of magnitude of possible development.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1



tion by about 100 cubic meters per second; this, added to Syria's assumed share of the natural flow, would provide sufficient water to irrigate the valley, including the area on the left bank.

Until recently it was thought that the length of head canal needed to connect Youssef Pasha with the irrigable areas would, because of difficult topography, preclude construction of an economic gravity irrigation system. The mission, taking account of experts' reports, has the following comments:

About 48,000 hectares on the river's right bank, between Youssef Pasha and Halabiye gorge, could be irrigated by pumping, at a cost of about £S 50 million; but this would not be an economic method of irrigating the fertile Ressafe plain. Both the valley and about 6,000 hectares of the plain could be irrigated by constructing a gravity canal branching from Youssef Pasha, at a cost of about £S 100 million. Whether it is worthwhile to spend an additional £S 50 million to irrigate a portion of the plain is a question to be considered.

On the left bank, however, a gravity canal branching from the Euphrates at the foot of Youssef Pasha dam could reach the plateau west of Raqqa, 100,000 hectares of which are now without any possibility of being irrigated, and could provide wide-scale irrigation between Ressafe and Halabiye gorge. About 185,000 hectares of excellent soils could be irrigated, about 155,000 by gravity flow and about 30,000 by pumping from the canal.

The possibilities of such a project should be investigated. We have made provision for such a study in our allocation for Euphrates valley studies; the aerial survey and mapping of the area are allowed for elsewhere. The gravity irrigation portion should cost roughly £S 266 million, of which £S 150 million (55%) represents the cost of the head canal. The pumping facilities would cost about £S 34 million. The construction cost of the project would thus be about £S 1,700 per hectare, less than that of the Ghab project.

*Halabiye Project*

Halabiye gorge offers an excellent site for a diversion weir: inundations would be restricted to the gorge itself. The weir could feed two irrigation canals, one on each bank of the Euphrates, extending 250 kilometers to Abou Kemal near the Iraqi border, and these could supply gravity irriga-

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1



tion to about 165,000 hectares, leaving about 50,000 to be irrigated by pumps.

The cost of such a project would be about £S 165 million, or £S 1,000 per irrigated hectare. But although it would irrigate the fertile Meyadine area and foster development of the Abou Kemal locality, we do not recommend its construction during the next five years. Halabiye is rather far down the Syrian Euphrates valley; much of the area is already under pump irrigation; and for the limited capital expendable the Youssef Pasha site offers wider potentialities, particularly in the generation of hydroelectric power for the Aleppo area.

*Khabour Valley*

The Khabour valley has possibilities for projects in addition to the Tell Maghass scheme. None has been fully investigated. The soils are generally of good quality, ranging from loamy sand to medium clay, suitable for cultivation of cotton, rice, peanuts and (in the northern parts) sugar-beet. All summer crops must be fully irrigated, and although rainfall is more plentiful here than in many parts of Syria, partial irrigation of winter crops is advisable in some areas.

A diversion weir could be constructed across the Khabour downstream from Ras el Ain to feed an irrigation canal on each bank. Areas of 13,300 and 7,400 hectares, on the right and left banks, respectively, could be irrigated. Rainfall in this area is adequate for winter crops and several large estate owners have installed pumps for summer cultivation.

A canal could be excavated on the right bank of the river, from Tell Maghass, but no more than 3,800 hectares would be irrigated; moreover, the soil is not very good, being sometimes excessively salted with gypsum.

About 12 kilometers downstream from Hassetche a dam could be built on the site of the ruined Roman dam of Saba Skour. Although this would permit the irrigation of about 15,000 hectares, it would unfortunately reflood the site of the previous reservoir whose fertile alluvium is now under cultivation.[3]

Sixteen kilometers downstream from Saba Skour another ruined Roman dam formerly supplied two large canals, one on each bank of the Taf river, a tributary of the Khabour. Here could be built an earth-fill dam,

[3] The area of this site is difficult to determine owing to the flatness of the surrounding country.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1



about 760 meters long and 15 meters high, to feed a 14-kilometer canal on the right bank, irrigating about 8,000 hectares (a longer canal might irrigate 10,000-15,000 hectares) and a shorter left-bank canal, irrigating about 6,000 hectares. The soil is fairly good, and the mission considers this the best project that could be started in the Khabour area. A rough cost estimate is about £S 30 million, or £S 1,500 to £S 2,000 per hectare, depending on the area irrigated.

All told, these projects would irrigate 62,000-69,000 hectares, including the 8,500 now irrigated by the left bank canal of Tell Maghass. With a duty[4] of 0.6 liters per hectare per second, about 40 cubic meters per second would be needed. Since that is the total discharge of the Khabour utilizable for irrigation, no water would remain for dry season cultivation downstream from the Taf. Accordingly, consideration has been given to storage of the Khabour flood. The downstream portion of the valley is very flat, with the exception of the right bank where it is bordered by an eroded plateau. The plateau is nearest to the river at Markada, and here a dam could be built to form a reservoir. About 800 million cubic meters could be stored behind a dam about 20 meters high; even after loss through evaporation from the large surface area, about 700 million cubic meters would remain, or about 45 cubic meters per second for a six-month irrigation season. This discharge could irrigate about 75,000 hectares out of a possible 250,000 along both banks. The sandy and loamy alluvial soils of this area would be suitable, under irrigation, for the cultivation of rice, cotton, peanuts, pulses, sorghum and maize.

The site's disadvantage is that the gentle slope of the left bank would require construction of a long levee, although there is an easy abutment for the dam on the right bank. Moreover, because the height of the dam would necessarily mean a very shallow reservoir, it would be difficult to prevent siltation. In the circumstances, the government has made no study, survey or cost estimate of the project. The mission recommends that aerial and ground surveys and mapping be undertaken to determine whether the site is satisfactory or whether an alternative must be found. As a first step, the ground survey should be limited to five or six profiles in the area contemplated for the reservoir. This should take about three days, at a cost not in excess of £S 1,000, to be charged to the study of the Euphrates valley, where most of the stored water would be utilized.

[4] The average quantity of irrigation water which must be applied annually to the land to bring the crops to maturity.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1



*Upper Orontes Valley*

In the area of Homs two projects are under consideration to expand cultivation in the upper Orontes valley, where cotton and sugar beet can be grown as summer crops and wheat, barley and clover as winter crops: a canal branching from Homs Lake to irrigate about 3,000 hectares on the left bank of the Orontes, and one branching from a diversion weir to be constructed about 23 kilometers upstream of the south end of Homs Lake. Here the dry season flow of the Orontes is at least 10 cubic meters per second, sufficient to irrigate about 15,000 hectares on the right bank, so that the Ghab project would not be adversely affected. However, the Orontes rises in Lebanon, where a project to irrigate the Kaa area is being considered. This would reduce the available flow at the Syrian border, correspondingly reducing the irrigable area in Syria. Since the project is estimated to cost about £S 15 million, an agreement with Lebanon on the partition of the Orontes should be concluded first. We also recommend a more accurate geological survey of the Rastane reservoir area, to ascertain whether potential capacity has been overestimated. Meantime, the two projects should be deferred.

*Barada Valley*

Consideration has been given to regulating the flow of the Barada river, to increase the irrigated area of the Ghouta in the vicinity of Damascus where soils toward the valley bottoms are suitable for the growing of vegetables.

Two dams across the Barada river at Hameh and near Makaren, each about 50 meters high, would provide a total storage capacity of about 180 million cubic meters, thus increasing the utilizable irrigation flow from 7 to about 15 cubic meters per second and permitting dry season irrigation of about 15,000 hectares of new fertile land in the vicinity of Damascus. A hydroelectric power plant could be built at the foot of each dam to develop a total power of about 10,000 KW.[5]

Surveys and studies have not progressed to the point of a draft project. A rough cost estimate is about £S 10 million for each dam, plus not more than £S 10 million for the development of the canal system, making a total

[5] These are recommended in Annex G.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 LiD1 Syria MD1



of about £S 30 million for the project (exclusive of the hydroelectric plants), or about £S 2,000 per hectare. The mission recommends that studies of the two sites be completed and that construction of the dams and hydro plants begin as soon as possible.

*Yarmuk Valley*

Cultivation on the alluvial and sometimes very fertile soils[8] of the Mzerib area irrigated from the upper springs of the Yarmuk river could be extended by pumping water to a new area of 4,500 hectares. This second phase of the Mzerib irrigation project has been fully investigated and is ready to be started; the first phase is already in operation. The pumps would be driven by diesel motors unless and until it is decided to build a hydroelectric power plant on the Yarmuk. The cost is estimated at about £S 7 million, approximately £S 1,500 per hectare. In view of the interest in developing irrigation in the Hauran mohafazat, which is in general not well provided with water, the mission recommends that this project be started without delay.

*Nahr el Kebir Valley*

The Nahr el Kebir, a short river flowing from the mountains bordering on Turkey, empties into the Mediterranean in the vicinity of Latakia. It has heavy floods, but in dry season the flow is no more than 0.5 to 0.6 cubic meters per second. A regulated flow would permit irrigation of about 4,000 hectares in the vicinity of Latakia for vegetable growing, thus making a significant contribution to the general development expected with the improvement of the port.

The construction of a dam of about 60 meters is projected, with sufficient capacity to permit flood control, irrigation, power and water for the port of Latakia. Site surveys are already under way. Additional cost studies must be made, but the cost will probably be of the order of £S 15 million. Although this is rather expensive for a single project, the mission feels that in view of its multi-purpose nature and the great importance of the development of the port of Latakia, studies should promptly be completed and the project constructed during the next five years.

[8] Suitable for cotton, with peanuts and citrus on the lighter soils.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1



### *The Mission's Program*

The new irrigation projects recommended by the mission, together with those under way, call for a total expenditure of £S 193 million over the next five years, to which must be added £S 3 million for maintenance and £S 1.2 million for research and demonstration, giving a grand total of £S 197.2 million. Table 1 shows the allocations among projects, together with an indication of the areas to be irrigated. Appendix Table II sets forth the irrigation schemes.

TABLE 1 Mission's Proposed Irrigation Program, 1955–60

| Irrigated area | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| New area | Already irrigated | Total | Projects | Functions | Total | Already spent | To be spent in the program |
| 43.0 | 22.0 | 65.0 | El Ghab . . . . . | D + GI | 103[a] | 1 | 102 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | Euphrates valley studies | | 3 | — | 3 |
| 4.5 | 4.0 | 8.5 | Tell Maghass (LB) . . | GI | 12 | 10 | 2 |
| 4.0 | 0.5 | 4.5 | Roudj . . . . . | D + GI | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 4.5 | 0.5 | 5.0 | El Senn . . . . . | GI + PI | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4.6 | 0 | 4.6 | Maarib . . . . . | PI | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| 10.0 | 10.0 | 20.0 | El Taf . . . . . | GI | 30 | 0 | 30 |
| 15.0 | 0 | 15.0 | Banda . . . . . | HEP + GI | 30 | 0 | 30 |
| 3.5 | 0.5 | 4.0 | Nahr el Kebir . . . . | HEP + GI | 15 | 0 | 15 |
| 89.1 | 37.5 | 126.6 | | | 208 | 15 | 193 |

*Key:* GI – Gravity Irrigation; HEP – Hydroelectric Power; LB – Left Bank; PI – Pumping Irrigation; FC – Flood Control; D – Drainage; R – Regulation

[a] Including £8 47 million to be spent in a later program.

NOTE: Area figures in thousand hectares; expenditure figure in million £S.

## III PLANNING

There are two stages of planning for irrigation projects. The first, the agricultural phase, entails a preliminary study of the soils and the computation of water duties. The technical phase includes planning of the civil engineering works necessary to divert, convey and distribute the water in the selected area. In the Main Report the mission has discussed the second

14:International Bank S-5(1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1



planning stage. Here we add a comment with respect to the so-called agricultural phase.

In the past, soil studies were not very extensive, but projects were being constructed in areas already under cultivation, where the fertility of the soil was well known. Now FAO experts supervise systematic soil analyses, and the results of these studies will be very useful for the development of future projects. Insufficient investigation of the perviousness of the soil, with consequent underestimation of the water duty, has resulted in undercropping in some irrigated areas. A striking example is the Homs Lake project, where the allowance of 0.20 liters per hectare per second does not permit full utilization of the cultivable area.

The mission therefore recommends that henceforth more extensive research under the supervision of both irrigation and agricultural engineers precede fixing of the irrigation duty. Since the soils vary little along the alluvial plain of the Euphrates valley, these studies could be confined to plots in Raqqa, Deir ez Zor and Abou Kemal, on the plateau west of Raqqa and in the Resafe plain south of Abou Hareira. These experimental plots could be quite small, water being supplied by small pumping plants or even by tankers. Provision is made in the mission's proposed expenditure on studies of Euphrates valley irrigation for equipment of experimental stations.

## IV WATER FEES

The fees for the various projects, according to the revised schedule for 1954, are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 Annual Water Fees per Hectare

(£S)

| Project | Size of holdings in hectares | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 to 5 | 5 to 15 | 15 to 20 | 20 to 50 | over 50 |
| Homs-Hama | 6.25 | 15.40 | 20.40 | 23.30 | 25.80 |
| Tell Maghas | 7.50 | 23.75 | 28.75 | 37.50 | 40.00 |
| Mzerib | 7.50 | 21.25 | 26.25 | 32.50 | 35.00 |
| Senn | 7.50 | 17.50 | 22.50 | 27.50 | 30.00 |
| Makt | 2.00 | 3.50 | 4.50 | 6.00 | 7.00 |

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
SYRIA MD1
LEBANON ME1



1952 and he has obvious affinities with General Neguib of Egypt whom he visited later in the year.

The threat of Zionism is considered very real in Syria and Shishakli has declared that Syria has not given up hope of a revision of the present position. Between March and May 1951 a flare-up over Lake Huleh brought an offer of Iraqi aid to Syria, but hostilities between Syria and Israel were localized and stifled without leading to a general outbreak of war. All Syrians wish Israel ill; fear of Israeli expansion remains and is fostered by the Government.

In internal politics, the most progressive measures which have yet been considered are land reform and the partition of state lands. There is little unrest among the people, who generally want to live their lives without undue government interference. Nationalism of two kinds exists: a nascent patriotism that has for the first time the support of the rulers, and a narrow xenophobia that, while less extreme than in Egypt, is more pronounced in Syria than in Lebanon.

### (*b*) LEBANON

Lebanon is a republic of which the Chamber of Deputies was till 1953 elected by direct manhood suffrage but in that year women were permitted to vote in the election. By convention, the President of the Republic must be a Christian and is normally a Maronite, the Prime Minister must be a Sunni Muslim and the President of the Chamber a Shii Muslim. The table on p. 466 above shows the division of parliamentary seats between the religious sects; a scrupulous observance of these quotas is evident even in the civil service establishments. The existence of a Christian majority is held to be essential for the survival of Lebanon as a separate state and so, in June 1950, it was found convenient to extend the franchise to Lebanese abroad (of whom the majority are Christian) and to increase the number of deputies from 55 to 77, but in November 1952, under a new electoral law, the number was reduced to 44. The Muslim rate of natural increase is higher than that of the Christians and it is probably for this reason that no census has been taken since. In other ways the constitution and administration are similar to those of Syria already described.

#### *Internal Politics*

As in Syria, a European type of political party system has not yet evolved and the struggle has been not only between different cliques of ruling families backed by great commercial wealth, but also between these rich groups on the one hand and

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
SYRIA MDI



248 433 of cultivation. Syrian cotton is a 'Lone Star' medium-staple variety and is of better quality than is needed for some locally-made clothes, which accounts for the fact that Syria both exports and imports cotton. There is still a long way to go before the country's cotton cultivation is as efficient as in Egypt or the Sudan, but cotton has become Syria's most important export commodity and the cotton acreage increased by no less than 800 per cent between 1945 and 1951, compared with an increase of 60 per cent and 70 per cent in Egypt and the Sudan.

241 433 Both 1951 and 1952 were bad years for olives; in the north, thousands of trees have been blighted by frost. Syria produces good fruit, especially in the oasis of Damascus, and peaches, apples, figs, plums, pears, grapes, apricots, and pistachio nuts are all grown. The most prolific vegetable crops are lentils, beans, and peas. The area under rice has been reduced by drainage schemes and Syria does not grow enough for her own needs. The famous tobacco of Latakia is grown under a monopoly which has recently been transferred from the concessionary company to the state. Silk and hemp are also cultivated and a start has been made in growing beet for the Homs sugar refinery.

231 439 234 Nearly 3 million sheep are estimated to graze in Syria with goats numbering over a million. Over 7,000 tons a year of coarse wool are exported, including about 2,000 tons a year suitable for rug-making. Cattle are of two types and, in 1950, numbered about 429,000.[1] Yoghurt and cheese and milk are consumed within the country. It is estimated that there are still over 72,000 camels in Syria and they are an important part of nomad economy. The Syrian horse and mule are still bred but in declining numbers.

• 185 The forests of Syria, as of the Mediterranean in general, are a survival from a period of greater rainfall coeval with the last glacial period of northern Europe. The woodcutter and the goat, war and erosion have taken their toll and trees are no longer an important part of Syrian wealth. An effort at re-afforestation is being made, and there is also a project to produce reeds for paper-making on the banks of the Euphrates.

*Industry and Commerce*[2]

377 In 1951 the output of electric energy was over 86 million kilowatt hours used mostly in Aleppo and Damascus. New

[1] *Statistical Abstract of Syria, 1951–2* (Damascus, 1952).

[2] For further details, see UN, Dept. of Economic Affairs, *Review of Economic Conditions in the Middle East, 1951–2*.

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
LEBANON ME1
SYRIA MD1



interest per annum. The Syrian private capitalist expects very large returns and the foreign private capitalist requires more security than is obtainable in the Middle East; thus the development of Syria must be financed either by the Syrian Government or by an international agency. Syria is one of the few countries to have refused American Point Four aid on principle, but she is a member of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and this organization has been studying some of the development schemes listed below.

1. *Drainage of the Ghab marshes.* Nearly 100,000 acres of land can be irrigated from the excess water of this area to improve agriculture and public health, and plans are well advanced.

2. *Euphrates barrage,* to provide 100,000 kws. of hydro-electric energy for irrigation and industrial needs. With this power it is hoped to irrigate half a million acres.

3. *Yarmuk and Barada rivers.* Hydro-electric schemes to give power to Damascus and the Hauran.[1]

4. *Latakia port.*[2] There have been complications over the award of the tender for this work, and construction had not effectively begun at the beginning of 1953.

5. *Khabur river.* Irrigation scheme for 22,000 acres.

6. Improvement of rail and road communications from Latakia to the hinterland and establishment of a network of all-weather roads in the Jezira.

7. *Rouj marshes.* Drainage to irrigate about 8,700 acres has already commenced.

If agreement can be reached to implement some of these schemes not only will Syria benefit but also the Arab refugees from Palestine may find employment and even homes.

### (*b*) Lebanon

Much that has been said about Syria also applies to Lebanon and, to avoid repetition, only points peculiar to Lebanon are here outlined.

#### *Agriculture*

The table on p. 488 above gives the approximate division of the land in cultivable and uncultivable areas and the estimated acreage; the crop and yield of the main agricultural products are given in the following table.

[1] An agreement with Jordan was signed on 7 July 1953, but work has not yet begun.

[2] See above, p. 487.

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
SYRIA MD1
LEBANON ME1
S
L
439



1950–1 amounted to £L215·5 million. Over half this deficit was met from 'invisible' earnings, such as the tourist trade and transportation, and the rest from private donations and capital movements. Indeed, during this period Lebanon's balance of payments showed a small surplus of £L2·7 million.[1] Most of Lebanon's trade (about 40 per cent) is with other Middle Eastern countries, but the foremost country in her trade is the United States (about 20 per cent). Europe and Great Britain are important sources of imports but not such large export markets. Lebanon's main imports are agricultural products, textiles, machinery, and oil, and her chief exports are agricultural products and textiles. The tourist industry is given full encouragement by the Government and, under certain circumstances, tourists' fares to Lebanon are subsidized.

*Development*

648
312
185

On 24 February 1951 Lebanon signed a Point Four agreement with the United States and the work to be carried out is based on the report to the United Nations in 1949 by Mr Gordon Clapp.[2] Irrigation projects are under way at Akkar, Yamouna, and Qasmiya, and there is a proposal to use the Litani river to irrigate over 12,000 acres of land. In August 1953 the Lebanese Government announced a four-year development plan; the main projects under consideration concern road and hydro-electric power development.

S
L
000

## Conclusion

The future of Syria and Lebanon will obviously depend to some extent on the past, many aspects of which have not been fully discussed here because the independent political and economic development of the countries began only in 1946. In internal politics events have moved too rapidly for any record to keep pace with them, and there is not yet apparent any stability that would allow one to regard views and information on the political scene as being valid for more than a brief period. As regards their external policy, the two countries have yet to be convinced that there is a community of interest between them and the West. The Western Powers need the use of Syrian and Lebanese territory on which to base a line of defence, but it is not expected that these countries could or should bear a significant part of the burden of defence in men, materials, and money. The Levant wants greater security against Israel than

[1] See table 6, p. 505 below.

[2] UN, Conciliation Commission for Palestine (chairman: Gordon Clapp), *Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East* (New York, December 1949).

15: Tannous N.G-5 (no date) 1951 M1 Middle East M1
Egypt MR1
Syria MD1
Saudi Arabia MJ1



About two years ago the Government of Saudi Arabia proclaimed its readiness to grant state land to any citizen who undertakes to put it under cultivation. This policy was developed on the basis of the Koranic statement to the effect that land belongs to the one who revives it. It must be remarked in this connection that the religion of Islam is basically for the equitable distribution and utilization of the land resource. Saudi Arabia is an Orthodox Muslim country, regulating its life in accordance with the religious law. This opens the possibility for the development of a form of ownership that is at the same time Islamic and effective.

In the summer of 1949 Col. Husni Za'im of Syria was liquidated through a coup d'état, but not so the reforms he had initiated. The idea of reforming the land tenure system has been kept alive. The government that followed that of Za'im created a committee representing various agencies to study the problem and recommend possible solutions. This activity bore fruit in the form of Article 22 in the new Syrian constitution, which provides, among other things, for (a) encouragement of small and medium land holdings; (b) setting a maximum limit to the size of holdings, but not retroactively; (c) making it obligatory upon the owner to keep his land under cultivation, otherwise he would lose his claim over it; and (d) distributing state land among landless peasants. There are also indications that the present govern[illegible] intends to take effective action in this respect. There is al[illegible]y a plan for the resettlement of peasants on state land in the Homs-Hama areas.

A promising sign in Egypt is the consciousness of the problem that is now shared by government officials and by people in various walks of life, including the peasants themselves. This consciousness has developed as a result of a rapid increase in population, bringing about a tremendous pressure upon the land resource. As mentioned above, this resource is highly concentrated in the hands of the very few, including the state. The landless or near-landless peasant desires strongly a few acres of the coveted precious land.

In response to this tense situation, Egyptian leadership is beginning to take some action. In some cases the government has

25: Wantner S-5 (no date) 1948 MI Middle East
Lebanon ME1
Syria MD1



the land. In 1926–31, 182 villages comprising 181,000 hectares were colonized in small properties by 6,000 families. The Government of Latakia compelled large proprietors in the region of Homs to give up their villages in the district of Masyaf in 1929; the land was distributed among the occupying peasants and sold to them at a price to be paid for in ten annual instalments. The village of Jib Ramle was also settled in 1929, in part by occupying peasants, in part by refugee Armenians.

But the French administration did not complete the settlement of these areas. In some regions the Turks settled these lands with nomad tribes, who were themselves averse to cultivation and either rented the land to Alawi villagers or continued to live themselves as nomads on the land without cultivating much of it. Consequently this land is now very sparsely settled. Round Homs there are said to be 2,000 to 4,000 hectares with only 10 per cent of the land cultivated: this is some of the most fertile and best situated land in the country, and could be developed by colonization schemes.

In several respects the French authorities have modified the Turkish system in ways which strengthen the landowners against the cultivators. One of these was the sale of the extensive *Waqf* properties to business enterprises, irrigation concessions, or landowners. Another was the abrogation of the right of ownership acquired by ten years cultivation which benefited the small cultivators in enabling them to acquire new land.

Efforts were made to start co-operative and agricultural credit banks, but these never succeeded in breaking the peasant's indebtedness. Several large-scale irrigation schemes were started, but produced more water than could be used. The educational system did not extend to the villages. Within the framework of the existing system, these reforms did little to raise the standard of the peasants. As a mandatory Power the French relied on the collaboration of the wealthy upper class, that is, on the landowners, and so could make no fundamental reforms in the land system.

### POSSIBILITIES OF DEVELOPMENT

So far as dry land farming is concerned the possibilities of improvement are hampered by the dry summer, which necessitates a long period of fallow. However, it would be possible by

25: Warriner S-5 (no date) 1948 MI Middle East
Syria MDI



Present-day Syria is not

• 185 a 'welfare State': the conception of the peasants' well-being has not penetrated to political circles. Settlement on these lines might have been promoted by an agency such as the Middle East Council of Agriculture, had that come into being; but for foreign capital as such, and for individual immigrants, the conditions are too uncertain.

SYRIA

(Visited 13 - 19 January 1953)

131 58. The Republic of Syria covers approximately 55,700 square miles and has an
162 estimated population of 2,900,000 (including nomads 3,200,000), Arabic speaking and
132 mainly Moslems. There is at present no problem of over-population. Much of the country is at present rain-fed dry land.

311 The total cultivable area is 12,500,000 acres of which about 1/3 is
312 under cultivation. Many irrigation projects have been started or are in contemplation. The systems of irrigation do not expose the peasantry in the same degree as in Egypt to bilharzia and the climate is invigorating for much of the year.

211 59. Agriculture and cattle breeding are the principal industries. A recent
231 government decree laid down that land not registered must be put at the disposal of the State, who will sell it at a low price in lots of 50 hectares. The land which is thus to be acquired is State Domain which at various times has been appropriated and cultivated by the big land-owning families. The areas involved are said to be 2.3 million hectares of cultivable land and 3.6 million hectares of grazing.

423 The land which is to be redistributed must be exploited within 2 years from the
● 185 date of purchase and must not be resold, although it may be mortgaged to the Agricultural Bank. The Bank will give financial help for the purchase and development of the land.

60. The scheme has been criticised on the ground that in order to avoid a fall in production from the large estates now being cultivated through private capital and a stop being put to the further exploitation of hitherto uncultivated land, the Government will require to make provision for the supply of capital and expert advice to new peasant owners. A scheme for the drainage of a considerable tract in the Jezirah area, known as the Ghab Swamp, is being drawn up as a result of a survey of the area by a foreign firm of engineers. This will also require large capital expenditure.

61. The financing of land redistribution schemes is outside the scope of our mission as is the furnishing of expert advice on new agricultural methods for the more successful exploitation of small estates, except in so far as agricultural extension services can be combined with health and other services appropriate to community welfare organisation.

62. The possibility of the Syrian Government's applying for outside technical assistance for any of the above-mentioned purposes is a matter of high policy which we did not feel justified in discussing with the officials whom we had occasion to meet during our visit to Damascus.

647 63. Dr. Joukhadar, the Director of Labour and Social Affairs, gave the Mission the
657 text of a project law (Appendix IV) that had been drafted in his department for establishing rural community centres, somewhat on the lines of those that exist in
185 Egypt.

64. The Decree contemplates that in each province a model centre be established to provide all requisite economic, health, cultural, social and administrative services this being "the only institution that can undertake all the responsibilities and guarantee the success of a programme of village improvement which does not involve

ill-considered plans and avoid abrupt changes". A separate section in the Labour and Social Affairs Department of the Ministry of National Economy will run and supervise the centres, introduce local industries, study local conditions and implement a programme to raise the standard of living and promote local welfare. The Department will be assisted by an Advisory Committee comprising representatives from all agencies interested. Three bodies participate in the conduct of each model centre: one will consist of the staff members of the centre; the second the advisors to the staff members and the representatives of local administrative authorities; the third will be not one single committee but five committees of local residents, each to be responsible for a particular aspect of the centre. All will work under the supervision of the staff. The Decree defines the several units to be constituted for each centre and their respective responsibilities.

649 657 185

65. It is intended that when the Government has established a model centre in each province, the example will be followed in other districts by villagers who (as in the Egyptian prototype) will contribute to and share with the Government the expenses of maintaining a sufficient number of centres to cover the whole country.

66. The scheme which was inspired by the Cairo Seminar of 1950 had, we were informed, been discussed and agreed with other Ministries concerned and tentative arrangements had been made with the University authorities for their co-operation in providing the necessary personnel for the centres. Unfortunately, however, the project-law had not received the approval of the Ministers and Dr. Joukhadar gave no indication of any date for its operation.

242 185 474

67. On the introduction of Mr. Carroll Deyoe, FAO representative in Syria, members of the mission had the opportunity of meeting at the Ministry of Agriculture Mr. Akram Rakabi, the newly-appointed Secretary-General, who gave an account of agricultural extension work in Syria and of the development of agricultural co-operatives in the country. He foreshadowed a possible eventual use of the profits of these societies for community welfare purposes, but the movement is in its infancy.

68. Thanks also to the courtesy of Mr. Deyoe, the mission was put in touch with the local representatives of the Near East Foundation. In the absence in Beirut of the Programme Director, Mr. Iyer, his Deputy (Mr. Khoury) gave us the statement of the work of the Foundation in Syria which had been prepared for the recent Damascus Seminar which we had hoped to attend. Mr. Khoury accompanied us on his visit to Rashabeyeh one of the four villages in which the Foundation operates demonstration centres in agriculture and sanitation and in home-making, respectively. Mr. Sivaswamy has prepared a detailed account (Appendix V) of his impressions of the work done at Rashabeyeh.

242 185 744

69. The centre has been in existence one year. Its premises are in adobe houses such as are to be found in many villages in these parts. They have been simply adapted for their present purposes and the standard of cleanliness was pleasantly surprising. The staff consists of: (1) a sanitary inspector who looks after general sanitation, including mosquito control by insecticides and by drainage. (He makes a point of talking to the village people about water supply, latrines, etc.); (2) a nurse-midwife, whose duties are: ante- and post-natal care, examination of pregnant women, education of local midwives, regular supervision of the infants in the village. (There is no maternity clinic; the women are delivered in their homes); (3) a doctor, paid by the Foundation, who visits the centre once a week.

S
242
185

70. The Mission as will be seen, formed a favourable impression of those whom it saw at Mashabeyeh. It was regrettable to learn that not only was the extension of the work hampered by lack of funds but that some local difficulties had arisen which suggested that there might still be some distrust of disinterested outside help in quarters that could not plead ignorance as an excuse. We had not the opportunity of pursuing inquiries to enable us to satisfy ourselves whether, if foreign direction and support were withdrawn, the work undertaken by the Foundation would collapse or become self-supporting, a point which had first been suggested to us in talks in Lebanon (see paragraph 10). We were, however, satisfied that if the venture were to collapse, it would not be due to any lack of a spirit of service or enthusiasm on the part of the Syrian field workers who are employed by the Foundation.

S
433
161

71. The country is under-populated and the population is so scattered as to make it difficult to provide the usual facilities through community centres. It should be added that there are large tracts of empty but arable land; so that if, as a result of efficient health services, the expectation of life increases and infant mortality decreases, there is no danger of lack of food.

72. Recommendations: In the light of the present cautious attitude of the Syrian Government towards the receipt of technical assistance from external sources, we recommend that the initiative should be left with the Government to seek United Nations aid for the furtherance of any scheme of community organizations for which it may be directly or indirectly responsible.

M
779
185
178

## III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

73. The "Middle East" is a convenient but misleading description which may be applied to a group of Arab-speaking countries, not all of which were included in our itinerary. Those which we were privileged to visit have many features in common, in spite of differences in characteristics and ways of life and varying stages and patterns of development. The Islamic faith prevails over the greater part of the area, though in some countries there are important non-Muslem minorities. Each country is the inheritor of an ancient culture; each has subscribed to the United Nations Charter, with its emphasis on improved standards of living as a contributing factor to the peace of the world; each is predominantly agricultural; each, in a newfound independence and under conditions of political instability, is reforming its land laws; and each has proclaimed the welfare of the people as a dominating purpose of Government policy.

185
657

74. In progress in community development in this group of countries little uniformity is to be observed. In Egypt, where the establishment of rural social centres became the official policy in 1939, after successful pioneering experiments conducted by the Egyptian Association for Social Studies, a stage has now been reached at which the whole scheme is under review, with the object of increasing its scope as efficiency. A reorganization involving decentralization and more inter-departmental co-ordination was in progress as we left Egypt.

75. We have found that Egypt is, compared with other Arab countries, well advanced as regards rural social centres since the population, or at least a part of it, understands the value of self-help. These social centres have to be expanded, both as regards numbers and the use made of each one of them. They do not require costly special buildings; provided that attention is paid to cleanliness, the work can be carried out in suitably equipped village houses, always assuming that the staff has the right spirit. To ensure a continuous standard of efficiency, regular supervision

59: Allen et al S-3 (1952-53) 1953 Mi Middle East
Syria MD1

Original: Arabic

APPENDIX IV

Introduction to Syrian Project Decree
for Establishing Social Centres

●185

The greatness of a country is measured by the extent of its progress and the level of the standard of living of the majority of its population.

The greatest part of the population in Syria consists of the fellaheen class. They are the workers and producers in the country and they are the victims of poverty, ignorance and disease as a result of deprivation for many decades of essential and necessary services.

The new Syrian Constitution is specially concerned with this class of people and provides that raising the standard of living of the fellah should be regarded and undertaken by the Government as a duty. The Department of Labour and Social Affairs, being the organ of the Government responsible for fulfilling this obligation, it has begun to study rural conditions and the needs and problems of the countryside. It has examined what has been done in other countries (e.g. Egypt, Greece) where similar conditions exist in the field of rural welfare. Practical experiments carried out by local organisations in some of the Syrian villages have also been studied.

In the light of this study the Department of Labour and Social Affairs suggests that the best way to improve the village and to raise standards of living is to care for the fellaheen and to provide in each village in a single institution all requisite economic, agriculture, health, cultural, social and administrative services. A "Social Centre" is the only institution that can undertake all these responsibilities and guarantee the success of a programme of village improvement which does not involve ill-considered plans and avoids abrupt change.

For these reasons the Ministry of National Economy presents in three Chapters the accompanying Project Decree for the establishment of social centres.

The First Chapter deals with the following:

The establishment of a model social centre in one village of each Governorate.

The subsequent establishment of other (private) social centres in the Governorate similar to the model social centre, with the proviso that in this case the fellaheen contribute to and share the expenses of the establishment of these centres.

The prescription of the several units which comprise the social centre.

The prescription of the responsibilities and services to be undertaken for the locality by the centre.

The establishment in each centre of (1) an administrative committee consisting of the staff members of the centre; (2) an advisory committee consisting of the administrative committee and representatives of the local administrative authorities and (3) the establishment, under the supervision of the staff, of five committees

●185 of local residents, each committee to be responsible for a particular aspect of the work of the centre.

Defines the duties, qualifications required, and methods of recruitment of the staff members of each centre.

Provides for the supervision of the private social centre ultimately to be established, and for technical and financial assistance for these centres.

The Second Chapter deals with:

The establishment of an Advisory Council consisting of representatives of the different Ministries and agencies interested, the function of which is to bring forward and to discuss suggestions, formulate recommendations, and furnish advice in all matters concerning the social centres.

The Third Chapter

This Chapter provides that a division within the ...partment of Labour and Social Affairs shall be created to carry out the responsibilities of establishing social centres, running and supervising them, and taking particular interest in improving or introducing new rural industries, studying the rural conditions and, in general, implementing a programme designed to raise the standard of living and promote rural welfare.

59; Allen et al S-3 (1952-53) 1953 MI Middle East
Syria MDI

APPENDIX V

Near East Foundation Activities in Syria

Notes by Mr. K.G. Sivaswamy, member of the Mission

•185

"The Near East Foundation is working in two centres, each covering four villages. But the contacts of the workers go farther than these villages to about 30 neighbouring villages. The villages are round about Damascus. The average holding is about 10 acres. Land tenure problems due to big landownership are not very acute here. The villages comprise mainly small owner-farmers. The holder of an uneconomic site as two dunams (1/2 acre) supplements his income by labour on other farms. The poorest group are the labourers whose number is estimated as a third of the agricultural labour population. They too have garden plots and a small house.

"The work of the Near East Foundation is mainly among the small farmers. Every centre has generally four workers, one for agriculture, another for sanitation, a third for teaching homekeeping and a fourth for maternity and child-welfare work. In one of the centres we visited, Nashabeyeh, there is a municipal doctor who attends to medical cases.

"The agricultural instructor at Nashabeyeh is a trained and experienced worker who appears to love his work. His popularity spread, we were told, because he prevented the spread of cottonball weevil by using DDT and some other material for dusting. The farmers seeing the advantage, are buying their own dusters for spraying insecticides. He has been able to introduce the cultivation of vegetables. A co-operative society has been started for pumping water and thus raising summer crops. He maintains demonstration farms in the centre. The farmers too have co-operated in making demonstrations in their own farms.

"The activities of the two centres were many, such as distribution of seed and seedlings, spraying of vegetables and fruit trees, spread of fertilisers and insecticides, etc. The centre at Nashabeyeh maintains a workshop and a number of agricultural implements for use and demonstration.

"At another centre, Kaber Emit, the farmers have begun to use more fertilisers, particularly superphosphates and ammonium sulphate. The cost of their transport on donkeys was high. The bulk purchase of fertilisers and its distribution by a lorry has cheapened it for the farmers. There is a co-operative marketing society here from which two wholesale merchants buy the produce, because it is graded. The farmers find that they are not now cheated on grade, weight and price as it was before the society was started.

"It cannot be said that the farmers have reached a stage where they can run the co-operatives by themselves. Loyalty to the society is bound to exist so long as the farmer benefits by its service. But the training of leaders in administration and group action through their committee may take some time.

185

"In order to spread improved agricultural practices and better ideas of sanitation, the farmers should be able to read the literature supplied to them. Literacy classes are therefore organized by the agricultural worker. Direct method of teaching by pictures is followed. In a few weeks the illiterate farmer is able to read under supervision.

"The sanitary worker engages himself in anti-malarial work. He co-operates with the activities of the government of Syria in this work. Draining the swamps is one activity. DDT spraying is another. Films on malaria in Arabic are shown. While in agriculture the improvements demonstrated are felt immediately, it takes time for ideas on sanitation, particularly the relation of flies and insects to the spread of diseases to be realised by the farmers.

"The worker also supplies cement slabs free of charge for pit latrines.

"The home-making instructress has a separate building in the village of Mashabeyeh where she teaches nutrition and methods of food preservation. She and the nurse-midwife of the centre have recently started a two-year course for girls in homemaking and midwifery. The object is to prepare some of these girls to attend the University and thus train village leadership.

"Reading and writing, Koran, child care, cooking methods, personal hygiene and sewing and needlework are taught. We saw a class attended by 15 girls. Five village girls attend these classes from surrounding villages. Six girls are in boarding at the centre. Considering the age-long prejudice in the area against the education of girls, this is no small achievement. A Mukhtar (village chief) pays £300 a year (£35 sterling) for the education of his daughter. Girls of low income families pay £60 (£7 sterling) in a year for their course of instruction.

"The nurse-midwife, a graduate of the Syrian University, helps in maternity cases. She and the home-making instructress make home visits and she has started a clinic for 25 babies, the object being to educate the women to use the centre not merely when they or their babies are sick but also when they are healthy. Prenatal care is taught to mothers. The nurse-midwife conducts a weekly class in midwifery every Thursday for 20 local midwives who come from a distance of 15 kms., riding donkeys or using public transport buses.

### Success and Difficulties

"The centre at Mashabeyeh certainly helps in modernising the social outlook of the people. It cannot, however, be a community centre run by the people for satisfying their own needs until the people are prepared by a preliminary process of adult education by example and precept. It endeavours to work in full co-operation with the government. It enlists the co-operation of local leaders by working with the aid of an advisory committee comprising the village Mukhtar and three members of the municipal committee. It has appointed Syrians as village workers. There are only two foreigners (Americans) who direct the activities. Even so, suspicion about a foreign agency is natural.

"The night meetings held to discuss village problems are attended by about 15 persons out of a population of 400 in the village. And we were told not all the 15 attend every time. Possibly it will take some time before public participation increases.

Syria MDI

● 185

"The youths are more responsive. In one village we were told that the son of the Mukhtar influenced his father to start a demonstration farm. The sons of farmers are helpful in spreading agricultural improvements.

"One example of public co-operation indicated to us was that the buildings were given at a nominal rent. These the MEF has remodeled for their own purposes. The agricultural centre is situated in a building built originally by the municipality for a cattle market and left unfinished for want of funds. The home-making and child-welfare centre is in a separate building. The boarding house is in a third.

"Village leadership is being evolved out of the activities of the co-operatives and spread of agricultural improvements. The training of village girls has a great future in supplying new leadership among women.

"The centre has certainly a social value in the adult education of the farmers and the women. But it cannot be copied. No government can afford to provide such centres for all the villages.

"Public co-operation to assume responsibilities will depend to the extent to which the government co-operates with the MEF. Nothing could be done without the full co-operation of the local officer. We were told of an instance in one village where so long as the local officer co-operated, the people gave every assistance, and how they grew lukewarm and even hostile when his successor displayed indifference to the work of the centre.

"The co-operation of the Imam in the Mosque is equally essential. In one village, the Imam censured the conduct of parents who sent their girls to the girls' school and the consequence was that nothing could be done in that village for the education of girls after this incident.

"The inherent defect in the administration of a community centre by a foreign agency is always there. It is but natural that people suspect their bonafides, and government, while fully co-operating, may yet have misgivings. The MEF, however, is doing its best to secure the approval of officials before undertaking new activities.

"Another problem too arises, when the state agencies are not strong enough to provide efficient services, and a non-official agency is able to render steady service to the people. It is but human if an unconscious jealousy arises among those who contrast their own inactivity with the good deeds of strangers.

"Most of the activities of the centres are what a normal state is expected to undertake. The villages need an agricultural demonstrator, a nurse-midwife, a girls' school, and a sanitary inspector. A non-official agency (MEF) is at present undertaking these activities. With an improvement in the administrative organization of the state, the need for the services of the MEF may disappear. A co-ordinated council of the state officers and the directors of the MEF at the top level may help in the maximum use of the services of the MEF. The MEF may assist in the direction of the services through this council. The staff of the MEF may be amalgamated with the state staff. In fact that demonstration centre at Damascus where various improvements are carried on in agricultural practices seems to be a joint project with the Ministry of Agriculture. The same principle may be further extended in regard to rural centres.

● 185 whether communities assume responsibilities for planning and executing their own activities in satisfaction of their common needs in the scheme of the NEP or not the centres of the NEP are certainly effective in liberalizing the farmers' outlook, and training them to take advantage of specialized services of the state as and when they are made available.

"Regarding governmental policies to promote community development, we learned from the Secretary-General to the Ministry of Agriculture that they were engaged at present in settling the excess population in towns in the Gezira area where large cultivable areas are available for land development, and secondly in cadastral surveys for clearing titles to land which at present do not exist.

"They hope to develop an extension and co-operative staff. Much remains to be done in the establishment of essential departments of state for rendering various services to the community. There are a few co-operatives only a year or two old, [illegible] it will be too soon to predict the lines on which community development will [illegible]s in relation to state services in the State of Syria."

---

62: I. L. O. S-5 (1947-1950) 1950 Ml Middle East
Israel MFI
Lebanon ME1
Syria MD1



would contribute the remaining quarter of the cost. About half of the State contribution would take the form of hospitalisation which would be largely financed from public funds, including the maintenance of general hospitals by municipalities.

### SOCIAL SECURITY BILL FOR LEBANON

A Bill on social security prepared by the Ministry of Labour was receiving consideration by the Lebanese Government in 1950. The purpose of this Bill was to set up an autonomous national social security fund for workers which would eventually pay benefits in respect of employment injury, maternity, sickness, long illness, invalidity, dependants, unemployment and death. Various social charges which the law now imposes on invididual employers would be taken over by this fund.

The proposed scheme would apply on a compulsory basis, in general, to employees of all undertakings in Lebanon except non-mechanised undertakings employing less than five workers and having a capital of less than £L. 5,000. Agricultural workers not operating machinery, family workers and domestic servants would be expressly excluded. Employers would contribute to the fund at an initial rate of 7 per cent. of wages and employees would pay a 4 per cent. rate. The additional revenue needed in each year would be provided by a Government subsidy.

The Bill provides for the introduction of the several types of benefit in three different stages. Payment of the first group of benefits would commence on promulgation of the law. These benefits would include employment injury benefits, family allowances, confinement allowances, and old-age and widows' benefits. To facilitate the financing of old-age benefits, employers would pay to the fund, either in a single lump sum or in instalments over a period of five years, certain amounts for which they were previously liable in respect of dismissal and related indemnities. The second group of benefits, including sickness and long-illness benefits and maternity care, would be introduced at the end of five years. The third group, consisting of invalidity and unemployment benefits, would be brought into force after 10 years.

The practicability of adopting the draft measure has been under study. The economic situation in Lebanon raises some difficult problems in this connection at the present time.

### DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIA

The possibility of introducing certain types of social security legislation and the problems which would be encountered in doing so have

62: I. L. O. S-5 (1947-1950) 1950 M1 Middle East
Syria MD1
Turkey MB1



S
745
185

been the subject of some preliminary statistical investigations and other studies in Syria. The General Federation of Syrian Workers' Unions has urged the Government to institute a social insurance system as well as a scheme of free medical care and medicines.

## TURKEY

T
745
185

Turkey has by now largely completed the enactment of its basic social security legislation, and an important part of the scheme is already in operation. Apart from completion of the administrative organisation of the new measures, important problems of planning which lie ahead include the extension of the scope of persons covered, especially to employees in smaller establishments, who are at present not subject to compulsory social insurance, on the one hand, and the refinement of existing measures, on the other. The latter task will include the removal of such anomalies and inequalities as may appear in the actual application of the legislation, and the further extension of benefits as facilities and circumstances permit.

square mile; in the province of Hauran, 80 per square mile; and in the province of Hama, 77 per square mile. In contrast, the population density of Al Jazira, incorporating the potentially fertile plains of the Khabour river basin, was 18 per square mile. The country is about 70 per cent rural, with the inhabitants living in some 5,000 villages. There are 6 principal cities with populations of over 30,000 — Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Latakia and Deir ez Zor. Damascus, the capital and a city of commercial and religious significance, had a population of almost 325,100 in 1949. Aleppo, an industrial and trade center, and the largest city in Syria, had a population of about 356,600. It disputes with Damascus the claim of being the oldest city of continued prominence in the world.

In addition to the older refugee communities, as the Armenians, the Assyrians and the Druzes, which have become established minority groups, Syria received an influx in 1948 of about 150,000 Arabs from northern Palestine. Approximately 80,000 located around Damascus; others in Hauran and the northern provinces. Their status and ultimate distribution were still undetermined in 1952, when the number on the roster of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees totaled 84,000. Over one third resided in special camps, but the remainder were living independently in the various towns and villages.

During the Ottoman regime, large numbers of Syrians emigrated to the Americas, and to Europe and Africa. Although they probably total almost 60,000, the Syrian colonies abroad are small in comparison with those of the Lebanese, and their influence on the cultural and the economic life of their homeland is proportionately slight.

The educational system has undergone revision since the founding of the republic in 1943, with increased emphasis on its adaptation to the culture and the needs of the people. Elementary education is compul-

p. 138(B)